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Mortuary Affairs Operations

Headquarters, Department of the Army

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Preface

This manual serves as a planning and operations guide for all personnel involved in mortuary affairs (MA) within a theater of operations (TO). These personnel must ensure the MA mission is completed with available personnel and equipment. They must also know the types of problems they may face in performing the MA mission. This manual will assist in determining operational capabilities and limitations and help guide the allocation of resources to successfully complete the mission.

This manual outlines existing doctrine and relates policy, procedures, and standards. This publication applies to the Active Army (AA), Army National Guard (ARNG)/Army National Guard of the United States, and United States Army Reserve (USAR) unless otherwise stated. It is designed for use as a guide to operations and procedures by commanders, supervisors, and planners. The use of Automated Information Systems (AIS) that are used to execute business functions is common throughout the sustainment mission area. The specific automation requirements and functional software applications that will support MA operations for the total Army are under development. Automated systems include the Global Combat Support System (GCSS), Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2), Movement Tracking System (MTS), Battle Command Sustainment Support System (BCS3), the Defense Casualty Information Processing System (DCIPS), and other related AISs at all force levels. These automated systems will provide the automated means to fulfill the MA requirements given in this manual.

This manual is a doctrinal guide to MA operations within an area of operations (AO) within a Joint TO. As such, it gives the mission and organization of the MA force structure. The manual also explains the role of the various levels of command in the TO. Command relationships between the different brigade combat teams (BCTs), the division, the corps, and the theater are current as of the publication date of this manual. This manual should be used in conjunction with JP 4-06 and AR 638-2.

The Armed Forces are charged with defending the nation and its people. This extends to safeguarding the natural environment. Former Chief of Staff General Dennis Reimer has stated "Environment responsibility involves all of us." The environmental ethic must be part of how Soldiers live and train. By working together, the Armed Forces can forge a premiere environmental stewardship program. Protection of the environment, while providing tough, realistic training, is the key to ensuring the Army is trained and ready to fight present and future enemies. All leaders are expected to serve as the Army's environmental stewards and have a personal and professional responsibility to understand and support the Army's environmental program. Violations of environmental laws and regulations can lead to civil and criminal liability, as well as liability under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). Leaders should ensure that unit personnel are properly trained and equipped to achieve environmental legal compliance. Special consideration should be given to storing, handling, and transporting hazardous materials and wastes that are inherent to the MA mission. Pollution-prevention techniques should be followed wherever possible. Such methods are preferred because they cost less than environmental cleanup and prevent adverse public opinion. Related publications are listed in the references section of this publication.

The proponent for this publication is the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). Users of this manual are encouraged to recommend changes and submit comments for its improvement. For each change, key the comments to the specific page and paragraph in which the change is recommended. Provide justification for each comment to ensure understanding and complete evaluation. Send comments and recommendations on DA Form 2028 (*Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms*) to Commander, U.S. Army Quartermaster Center and School (USAQMC&S), ATTN: ATSM-MA, 1201 22d Street, Fort Lee, VA 23801-1601.

Direct e-mail questions to the U.S. Army Mortuary Affairs Center (MAC) at MACweb@lee.army.mil.

Users should not view this manual as a sole source of information. Other supporting publications are referenced throughout this manual. A list of publications supporting this manual is provided in the references section.

Chapter 1

Mortuary Affairs Overview

Show me the manner in which a nation or a community cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender sympathies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land and their loyalty to high ideals.

William Gladstone

MISSION

1-1. As today's Army continues its transformation to the future force, it must remain ready to fight the enemies of both today and tomorrow. As the rise of noncontiguous conflicts demands faster and more deployable fighting units, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the American public will continue to demand the expeditious return of deceased personnel. The Army's role within the Joint Mortuary Affairs Program (JMAP) will continue to be one of the nation's most important and sensitive missions throughout the foreseeable future.

1-2. As the DOD executive agent for the JMAP, the Army is responsible for providing MA support to all Service components during peacetime. Eligible recipients include, but are not limited to, U.S. Service members and their eligible dependents, DOD civilians, contractors, and other authorized civilians assigned outside the continental United States (OCONUS). During wartime, the MA mission is expanded to the joint operations area (JOA), providing MA support to coalition and allied forces, upon request; enemy personnel killed in combat or who die while in U.S. custody; and local nationals as required. See AR 638-2 for a full listing of eligibility criteria and authorized benefits.

1-3. Generally, the Joint Mortuary Affairs Office (JMAO) will appoint a lead agent within a JOA that oversees all MA functions. Based upon theater or operational requirements, policies may be developed for handling remains and personal effects (PE) of personnel not listed in AR 638-2. The JMAO has oversight of all MA operations within the JOA; any questions concerning policies within that theater must be directed to that office for clarification. See JP 4-06 and CJCSM 3500.05A for the duties and responsibilities of the JMAO.

1-4. Current joint MA policy states that the remains of all members of the Armed Forces of the United States must be returned for permanent disposition according to the desires of the person authorized to direct disposition (PADD). Personal effects will be returned to the person eligible to receive effects (PERE). The JMAP is divided into three subprograms which represent the spectrum of joint operations across the globe. The three programs are Current Death, Concurrent Return, and Graves Registration. For specifics on each of these programs, reference chapter 1, section II of AR 638-2.

1-5. The role of the MA specialist (Military Occupational Specialty 92M) is to search for, recover, tentatively identify, and coordinate evacuating remains to the continental United States (CONUS) through a structured evacuation system. The function of the 92M Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) is to ensure subordinate personnel and unit leaders are trained to standard on current MA policies and procedures. The MA specialist is also responsible for the inventory, safeguard, and evacuation of PE of U.S. Service members, coalition and allied forces, enemy combatants, civilians on the battlefield, and others as required.

1-6. In every case, MA personnel, in conjunction with unit personnel, will attempt to tentatively identify the deceased prior to evacuating the remains. Preserving all identification media is paramount to a speedy return of remains to the PADD. However, evacuation will not be delayed for tentative identification. If required and authorized, MA personnel will conduct temporary interment, disinterment or reinterment

operations. The MA Specialist provides backup support and guidance for initial search and recovery during combat operations; the primary responsibility within an area of responsibility (AOR) lies with the unit commander.

THEATER RELATIONSHIPS

OPERATIONAL LEVEL

1-7. The operational framework for Army forces rests within the combatant commander's theater organization (figure 1-1). Geographic combatant commanders (GCC), commanders with geographic responsibilities, designate theaters of war, TOs, combat zones, and communication zones (COMMZ) as they see fit. A TO is a subarea within a theater of war as defined by a combatant commander within which forces conduct or support specific combat operations. Different TOs within the same theater of war will normally be geographically separate and focused upon different enemy forces. TOs are usually of significant size allowing for operations over a significant period of time. FM 3-0 provides a detailed discussion of theater territorial organization.

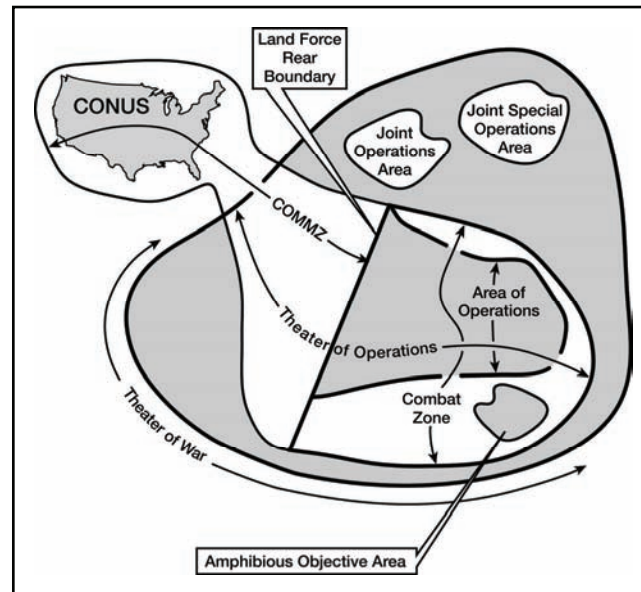


Figure 1-1. Theater organization

1-8. Joint force commanders (JFCs) at all levels may establish subordinate operational areas (figure 1-1). JP 3-0 discusses the assignment and responsibilities associated with establishing JOA within a TO. Due to the unique structure of the MA evacuation channel, MA generally operates within a JOA. The JMAO has responsibility for the JMAP within a JOA. For more information on JMAO responsibilities, reference JP 4-06.

1-9. The key areas concerning the deployment and execution of the MA mission include the COMMZ and the combat zone. The COMMZ is the area within the TO that contains the lines of communication (LOC), establishments for supply and evacuation, and other agencies required for immediate support of the field forces. In a contiguous area of operations (AO), the COMMZ is generally located behind but contiguous to the combat zone. Within a noncontiguous AO, the COMMZ may be commingled with the combat zone. The combat zone is the area required by combat forces for the conduct of combat operations, generally the area forward of the corps rear boundary.

1-10. The Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) is normally the Army Service component commander's major organization responsible to provide common-user logistics (CUL) within the TO. The TSC is responsible for providing the Army Service Component Command (ASCC) with a common logistical